

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

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"*A Faire Danzell*," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER XI.

##### THE CHANCE OF NEW WORK.

JESSE was too happy for thought; but without the help of thought or words he seemed lifted into a region of intense happiness. He had been given the best gift since his arrival at Rushwood—the power to worship beauty and goodness without in a perfectly unselfish manner. Once bring in man's self and you bring in man's pain. As yet the pain had not come.

The next day he took a walk with Symee along the valley of the Four Pools, and all the time he seemed to feel more than to think: "I may, perhaps, see her; she may be sitting on one of the bridges, or bending down near some little corner of the bank making the water happy by reflecting her."

All the thoughts of the true worshipper cannot be written, because the very channel of words seems to spoil them, like the bloom that is brushed off from the fruit which is picked by rough, careless hands. Words are not subtle enough for such feelings, unless a Dante may string them together.

But fact often triumphs over imagination, and, to-day, no Amice appeared in the valley. Still it was happiness for Jesse. Not getting what he wanted did not make him despise what he had; he was not used to many good times, and he knew how to appreciate what he got.

Another merry tea-party, this time joined by Mr. and Mrs. Deeprose, after

which, like a schoolboy, Jesse begged if he might feed the chickens, some of whose pens were near the fir-wood a little way down.

Symee was tired, and stayed to help to wash up the tea-things. She was not used to this sort of work, and it pleased and amused her as something new; and, so doing, she bestowed many blessings on Amice as she rubbed the plates dry and watched Jesse going off whistling. He had been telling them about poor Milly Diggings, and Mrs. Deeprose said she would send her a hamper of good things when Jesse returned.

Now it happened, when Jesse had fed the chickens, and looked with intense pleasure at the merry multitude and their quaint ways of showing pleasure and anger, that, still whistling, he sauntered further on. The red stems of the firs were catching the sunlight; the brown needles below appeared almost scarlet, and the patches of bracken by the side like sheets of gold flung carelessly down. Jesse looked and noted, as he had looked and noted in his childhood; the want of human sympathy had made him notice the world of Nature, and she had, therefore, revealed many secrets to him.

All at once his meditation was stopped by the sound of a tune whistled very sweetly and correctly, and the slash of a stick against the ferns. There, round the corner, came a boy with a letter-bag—the post-boy who brought the letters from the Beacon post-office and took away what there might be to go. Mr. Kestell paid for this honour, otherwise the inhabitants of this lonely district might have tramped up to the post-office at Rushbrook Beacon for their letters. The boy was a late institution, and knew not Jesse; but he soon

thawed under Jesse's influence. A boy knows sooner than any one who means friendship to him, and he drew his letter forth with triumph.

"Be you Mister J. Vicary? Here's a letter for you."

Jesse took it and finished a country talk with the boy before he walked on, down a lane where the blackberries were luxuriously overtopping the hedge, and the big dewberries looked luxurious to town-tied Jesse. The lane ended at the foot of a small hill where the firs began again. Jesse made a bound on to the needle-strewn brown carpet, and opened his letter. He knew the handwriting; it was from Hoel Fenner.

It was a short letter, but it seemed to take a long time to read. Jesse sat and stared at it, and read it and re-read it, and then finally stood up against a tall, red-fir trunk.

Thus ran the letter:

"DEAR VICARY,—The editor of 'The Current Reader' was much pleased with your work. The whole paper was so business-like, and yet cleverly reported, that, if you really mean what you told me, I believe we can offer you a post at the office which may lead to something better. We want a man whom we can send where we like to take reports, and do all kinds of other literary work in spare time, which is above ordinary hack-work, and which will show if you could get further up the ladder.

"I think the best way will be for me to come down on Saturday till Monday to stay with my friend Mr. Heaton, and I will then speak myself to Mr. Kestell about the matter. I quite understand that you might find it a delicate matter to transact alone. Don't thank me; I was much impressed with the scenery at Rushbrook, and I want to see it again. The pay would at first be the same as what you are now receiving, but would be increased very soon if you were found to be the right man in the right place. Yours truly,

"HOEL FENNER."

No wonder Hoel put in "don't thank me," knowing all the time he should earn much gratitude, because in his heart he knew a letter would have been quite as useful as an interview. And the excuse about scenery was a cloak for quite other reasons; but then, such is human nature! Hoel had got a first-rate excuse for seeing Elva Kestell again, and he seized it, though even to himself he pretended—for no pre-

tence is greater than that we carry on between our two natures—that it was really necessary he should go down and interview Mr. Kestell about this new proposal for his protégé.

Jesse stood some time rooted to the spot, with his back against the fir, and his heart swelling with thankfulness. Only now did he fully realise how burdensome had been his uncongenial work, how his whole being turned towards books, and literature, and literary work. It seemed to him that had his own well-being alone been in the question, he would long ago have thrown over the coals and begun at the lowest rung of the ladder which he had longed to climb. But then Symee had always been part of the question, and no uncertainty might be thought of for her sake. But now all was changed; there could be no pecuniary loss. On the contrary, there was a prospect of quickly increasing his income, and thereby a nearer prospect of being able to send for his sister. What added to the joy was his having received the news here in his own dearly-loved woods, with the autumn winds playing in the branches, as if they wished to add a rejoicing accompaniment to his thoughts.

If Jesse had been told he had inherited a large fortune, he would not have felt half the joy that the prospect of this work gave him.

After a time his thoughts turned to his friends in Golden Sparrow Street. It seemed almost hard that this good thing should have come to him, and that he could not share it with his poorer friends; for Jesse had a nature which joy has the effect of making more tender to others. The impulse of the best childhood, to share everything with those present, had never left him.

It was at this moment of intense joy that Jesse, looking up, saw the well-known form of Mr. Kestell slowly coming down the hill. It was some moments before the young man moved; and during these moments he watched with deep reverence the man who had helped him to reach the pinnacle of joy he now stood upon. How often he had seen in his mind's eye the venerable head with its handsome features, its benevolent eyes, its gray hair just touching the coat-collar! All was photographed on Jesse's brain, even to the thin, nervous hands, and the cut of his coat just a little antiquated, but in perfect harmony with the whole man.

"He is coming to see me," thought Jesse. So, reluctantly leaving his fir-tree, he walked quickly down through the fir-needles, and stepping over a ditch at the bottom, found himself close to Mr. Kestell.

It so happened that Mr. Kestell had been deep in thought, and not thinking of finding Jesse here, started visibly as the young man suddenly stood beside him.

"I saw you coming, sir," said Jesse, by way of apology for startling him, "and I thought if you were coming to see me, I might save you the rest of the walk."

Mr. Kestell held out his hand, and Jesse took it, remembering more that he was Amice's father than his own benefactor. It was a new glory to add to many others which, in Jesse's mind, crowned the grey hairs with an ever-bright aureole.

"Thank you. I did not expect you here, Vicary, but I am very glad to see you. I was coming to the farm; but now you are here, I need go no further. If it falls in with your plans, I shall be glad if you will walk back to Rushbrook with me."

Jesse turned round with an exclamation of pleasure.

"I should like it above all things, sir. This road seems to me more beautiful every time I see it. I must thank you very much for allowing my sister to come to the Home Farm; it is a pleasure which I had not expected."

Jesse spoke so simply and so heartily that it was, or would have been to most people, a pleasure to hear him. There was not the least cringing in his tone, but rather a deep respect, which, given freely, is an honour to any man to give or to receive.

"And you are quite comfortable at the farm? The Deeproses are good and kind people."

As he spoke, Mr. Kestell glanced at Jesse, though without looking him full in the face.

"Yes; they are not, of course, the same as my old friends; but one cannot expect that. Mrs. Norton is still alive, I hear, at Greystone."

"Yes, I give her a little pension; but she is getting very old now; I doubt if she will live to enjoy it much longer. She does not care to see people now."

"I'm sorry for that; I should have liked to have talked over old times."

There was a little silence, then Mr. Kestell said:

"And you are quite settled with Card and Lilley? It is a very solid firm; no

fear of any disaster with them in the commercial line. I am extremely glad they were able to give you the post you occupy now. But, anyhow, they would have given you good recommendations to another firm. You have always been steady and attentive."

Mr. Kestell seemed to be repeating his thoughts more than saying something that required any answer; and Jesse, feeling he must wait now for Mr. Fenner's arrival, said nothing, though he felt somewhat guilty at the next remark.

"You will see, Vicary—or I do not doubt that you have already done so—that in business it is of the greatest importance for a young man to have testimonials of long service in the same house. A few more years of this same kind of work, and you will be sure to get employment somewhere, even if Card and Lilley were to fail. I think I may say your future is assured; and this thought is a great comfort to me."

"Thank you, sir," said Jesse, quietly; he was beginning to feel uneasy as to what Mr. Kestell might say of his change of employment.

There was another pause, and Jesse was wishing he might speak out openly, for concealment was very foreign to him; so, plunging into a subject which was nearly related to the one he must not yet mention, he said:

"I was wishing to tell you, sir, that I ought to say—"

Mr. Kestell stopped short, and looked quickly at Jesse.

"What is it?" he said, very gently.

"That my greatest wish is some day to make a home for my sister. I have been trying to find a little extra work in order—"

Mr. Kestell and Vicary had now reached the road by the Pools. There had been a little clearing made close by the water, so as to allow a view across. This evening it reflected the crimson clouds so that one little corner looked like blood. Above, the silvery birches bent towards the Pool, as if ready to plunge into the bosom of the life-giving water. A few reeds, with brown, withered tips, stood up stiff and straight, while the arrow-head at their base swayed slightly in the ripple.

If Mr. Kestell noticed any of these sights before interrupting, it must have been the crimson water, which was for a few moments very striking; but Jesse looked at this and more, because, as a boy,

he had often stood here and watched each smile, each movement on the face of Nature.

"I do not advise you, Vicary, to entertain this thought; Symee is perfectly happy and contented at Rushbrook. I even questioned her on this very subject a little while ago. You would only take her to a very pinched state of existence, which she has not been accustomed to—"

"Symee is very brave, and we are twins; we have no other ties. I believe you once told me, sir, that when my grandmother died, I had no other relation who could take me in; in fact, that there were none to take pity on such poor specimens of mortality."

Vicary spoke a little lightly to hide his real feeling.

"None that I could find; otherwise, of course, I should not have taken you out of—" Mr. Kestell hesitated, "out of their care."

Jesse had grown up with the knowledge that Mr. Kestell had befriended him; it did not enter his head to ask why he had thus acted.

Whether Jessie might now have revealed Mr. Fenner's offer, to show cause why Symee should leave Rushbrook, had an interruption not occurred at this moment, must remain doubtful; but, just as they were passing the Pool, Mr. Guthrie suddenly appeared, and put an end to further talk.

With his usual kind geniality, George Guthrie greeted Jesse warmly. If he were a Conservative, and of a good old English family, he certainly prided himself more on his warm heart than on his birth. He never made any one feel that they were beneath him.

"Why, Vicary; you here? Very glad to see you; I'm particularly glad to know you are alive and well, because I've been hearing your praises sung so much lately. I began to fancy you must be a myth. It's a very bad omen when all men speak well of one, I believe, though as I've never experienced this universal approbation, I shouldn't know what to do with it, eh, Mr. Kestell? Now, if I could have earned your good character, I should do my best to keep it up; but I was called an idle vagabond so early in life, that I grew into my character with the same ease as a mongrel puppy becomes a mongrel dog. I've been the patient peg to hang my bad name upon so long, that now I

should be sorry to lose it. When I take to literature, I shall write an essay on character, and prove entirely that it's made for us, and that it's humbug to say we make it for ourselves."

Jesse felt at his ease at once; somehow, Mr. Kestell had had the opposite effect upon him.

"Indeed, Mr. Guthrie, I'm only too glad to come back to Rushbrook, whatever my reputation may be. But if you got it from Mr. Fenner, I fear it's worth little. He's been very kind to me, that's all."

"No, he was not my informant; but never mind. You see that one's secret sins and virtues are found out without our knowing in this small world. I assure you, that is the only motive that prevents me doing all kinds of wickedness. I say, if I could do this, and no one know, I would; but there's the rub. Actions seem to me to be always accompanied by the cranes of Ibisus."

"I must be going in," said Mr. Kestell, quickly. "I shall see you again, Vicary, before you go. Guthrie, won't you come in and see the ladies?"

"Well, yes, I will; I hear Amice singing, and she would draw me anywhere, when she does that; but she's like a mermaid—can't often be caught combing her hair and singing her unearthly songs. Good evening, Vicary; I shall come and call on you at the farm, and we'll have a good talk."

They were near the front gate, and the two gentlemen went in. Whilst Jesse pretended to cross the bridge, as if he were going for a walk; but very soon he returned and listened. He was but a poor man's son, he might not go within the sacred precinct that contained her; but no one could prevent him listening. As he listened, Jesse Vicary's soul seemed filled with great thoughts of the future. Could not a man climb the ladder of fame till, whatever his birth, men would be proud to know him, and women would admire him for himself? There was no bitterness about the present in this thought—only a great hope for the future. Some day Amice Kestell might be proud to have known him.

#### SIGHT-SEEING AS A CAREER.

AMONG other habits of dubious merit which the present century has set hard and fast upon us, that of systematic sight-seeing



may well be gibbeted. Of course, there is no harm in the indulgence of this habit up to a certain point. On the contrary, it is, in its way, a method of education nearly as effectual, and, in the beginning, quite as pleasant as the common walks of schoolmasters, grammars, and dull object-lessons. But, by-and-by, when the habit has become almost ineradicable, and holds the victim as tight as a diabolical incubus, there is nothing for it but to groan, and wish civilisation were other than it is.

We complain in the newspapers about the iniquity of the process of cramming, to which it seems needful to apprentice those of our children who cannot be said to possess more than an average share of wits. The boys are day by day made to swallow a multitude of nauseous pills, gilded with the coating of expediency. They do not like it; but they are intelligent enough to agree with their sire or their tutor that the end may justify the means. And when the end is really attained, they are free to rejoice, disburden their brains of the many uncomfortable facts they have put upon them, and laugh through the rest of their days. The "crammer" of their youth is, thenceforward, little more to them than a bad dream dreamed a month ago.

Now the man who is inoculated with the malady of sight-seeing is not privileged to escape, like the boy, from the bonds which distress him. Only when he is a tottering septuagenarian may he hope to be saved. And even then it is doubtful. For there are so many modern appliances for the lessening or suffocation of the pains of fatigue, that it is always possible that he may end his days abruptly in the thrall of his old pastime, either amid the cushions of a Bath-chair, or leaning on the pretentious arms of a patent electric crutch warranted to galvanise the aged into a state of juvenile activity.

It were shameful presumption, and, moreover, absurd to cast stones at the inveterate sight-seer, if there were any sterling results to show for the labours to which his life is consecrated. But, in truth, his toils are as profitless as were those of Tantalus. They are, therefore, positively vicious; for there is no half-way house in matters of this kind. He is divorced from all those most excellent influences which work upon the man who elects to spend his days at home, content with the sphere he can embrace with his own arms. Wife and children he must not think of; or if he

does view matrimony, it is at a distance, and in opposition to the habit which will by no means submit to the chains sure to be set upon it by a prudent spouse. The respect and affection of his fellow-men he is as remote from all chance of securing as from the sober joys which wait upon a judicious marriage. How can his friends and acquaintances estimate a man who, if he is with them to-day, is likely to be on the Pyramids to-morrow, and next week exchanging bows with a Polar bear in Spitzbergen? He is not on a common plane with them, be their inclination towards him ever so strong. Though they strive to treat him as a familiar, his manner of life is an irresistible bar to the warm addresses of familiarity. He is, also, by his erratic courses, out of the way of those most educational abstractions—responsibilities. Not for him is the proud seat of the Councillor, whether of town or county, or whether acting as a State representative at Westminster. The least sapient of greengrocers would laugh to scorn the idea of giving his vote for such a man to become one of the municipal magnates. He may have much uncommon information about several continents at his fingers' ends, as the phrase goes; but the greengrocer cares nothing about that.

"What I want, and what the town wants," protests the tradesman, with much truth, "is a gentleman that stays and looks after his own home, and can always be found when he's wanted. Foreign lands are for foreign folk, I think, just as the stars have their people, and the earth has hers. With taxes seven-and-six in the pound, the man who wants to sit in the Council must sit there and do his best to bring them down to five shillings, and not be going away to Spain with his letters of apology, coming back only in time to say: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to offer myself to you for re-election, and I need not say that I have your interests as near my heart as my own.' It isn't natural, and it's bad for the town."

The greengrocer is, in fact, likely to be the wiser man of the two. The plea that one travels for knowledge is not applicable to the systematic sight-seer. He has got beyond that stage. It may even be averred that he journeys to escape the claims of knowledge and mellow experience. Opportunities of acquiring knowledge shower upon him as upon no other man; but his intelligence is like a duck's back: it shakes

itself free from the showers as fast as they rain upon him. He sees all things, and reflects upon nothing. Though he travels among peoples of all kinds and colours, he carries his old prejudices with him wherever he goes. With him a Frenchman is, to the last, a Frenchman, and a Chinaman a Chinaman. He never comes to regard Frenchmen and Chinese, Hindoos and Greenlanders alike as human beings, not so very dissimilar, at bottom, to himself. The habits of a foreigner are, to the last, repugnant to him, because they differ from his own habits.

The Faroese islanders have a wise little proverb which says that "the man who lives always at home knows how to behave in the world." I believe Socrates once said something akin to this. If he did not, the forefathers of Faroe have the more credit for the strength of their intelligence. Be this as it may, the proverb could have no better confirmation than in the man who is the subject of this paper.

But I hear it protested: surely you do not imply that the more a man sees of the world, the less he becomes fitted to conduct himself decorously among the people of the world?

No, indeed. With most men, the spirit of cosmopolitanism would be strong for good. At least it would befit them for easy behaviour in dilemmas which would puzzle the man who never leaves his native land. But the mere sight-seer is a man apart. Though he hardly realises it, he resembles the dove which Noah let out of the ark, and which wandered to and fro over the unyielding waters, seeking in vain a congenial resting-place. And, in truth, to our friend, the world with all its manifold spectacles, is hardly more varied in its power of entertainment than if it were like that world of waters which certainly disquieted the dove, and probably also seemed to it a little monotonous.

Wisdom is best picked up at home. It is then admirably available for use abroad in the world.

On the other hand, the man who, without very discreet self-discipline, goes abroad in the world, here, there, and everywhere, is sure to find himself at home nowhere; and probably nowhere less at his ease than in the fond old nest which has taken such tender shapes during the few moments of affectionate reflection which he has consented to allot to himself.

Others, as well as a literary man so profoundly subjective as Gustave Flaubert,

have every reason to confess that, "to take pleasure in a place, it is necessary to have lived there a long time."

The professional sight-seer is thus debarred, intrinsically, from the very gratifications which the uninitiated of, for example, his native village, make no doubt he is enjoying to the fullest and most enviable extent.

Again, in no respect is our unhappy friend more to be pitied by the rest of us who stay at home than in the extinction of his faculty of imagination. Do but think for a moment of his sad condition. The majority of us are so fortunate as not to be able to see a tithe of those wonders of the world about which we have dreamed from the days of our infancy. Even when we are old men and old women, we are as eager and enthusiastic on this subject as ever we are. We may then flatter ourselves that we know all about human nature, and that we are to be surprised by no event, howsoever preposterous or unexpected. Thus far we are fully disillusioned. But our experience of the inanimate works of nature, and the heroic or laborious achievements of mankind in divers ages, is so limited, that it may be termed quite infantine. The traveller, whether sight-seer or man of science, is still a personage to whom we look for solace in the dull, final days of our pilgrimage.

But the sight-seer himself has none of this satisfaction which, it is supposed, he has it in his power to bestow upon his fellow-men. He has glutted his eyes with the world's glories. His heart has chilled to ice during his long, intolerable pilgrimages. When you talk to him of the divine charms of a sunset, he smiles you to silence. Has he not seen sunrises and sunsets from mountains and plains, in every continent? "My dear sir," he may say, in the frigid tone that stems the flow of warm, hearty, and healthful animal spirits, "take my word for it, one sunrise is much like another!"

It is the same with everything else. He could no more delight himself with the mental picture of a snowy Alp high against the blue, than the valetudinarian with one foot in the grave could find pleasure in a Lord Mayor's banquet. He is incapable of appreciating what is good in Art, except by that wearisome standard of comparison unguided by insight. Both Nature and Art are to him little better than a cheerless prison-yard, which he is doomed to perambulate until he is called elsewhere.

Of course, the man in such a case—unanchored, without the restraint and beneficial discipline of wholesome responsibilities, and soon prone to regard the world merely as a picture-gallery which the Creator has opened for his diversion—is likely to develop briskly into an egotist of the first water. It could not be otherwise. He is the centre of the solar system. Sun, moon, and stars are provided directly for his use. He resents, as a freak of atmospheric impertinence, the intervention of a cloud when, for instance, he goes to see the Colosseum by moonlight. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other similar disastrous phenomena of Nature, interest him as spectacles only. He is not prone to sympathise deeply with the sufferings of the wretched beings who have been overwhelmed by such displacements of the earth's surface. If it rested with him to determine whether this or that catastrophe should or should not be attended with loss of life, I fear he would vote unscrupulously for the loss of life. In short, though it may seem little less than amazing exaggeration to say so, he is a civilised monster. The ghoul or cannibal of savagedom is not exactly an amiable being; but I think he appeals more to the sympathies than the established man of the world as sight-seer, whose heart's blood is, by his own deliberate course of life, dried within him.

Did he but know its consequences, our friend would assuredly have preferred a spell of years at the treadmill to the life he has chosen to lead. For my part, indeed, I think the criminal, who is not lost to shame, has some very fine opportunities of sober happiness during the dull round of his prison life. The world is shut off from him. He has little chance of being reunited with it for some months or years. This separation from it soon hallows it in his memory. He comes to regard it as one is apt to think of a dead relation or friend. The relation, or friend, is sure to have had a few faults when he was alive; but now that he is no longer with us, we are oblivious of his defects, and mindful only of his virtues, which we magnify. And so also the criminal finds his affections daily stronger and stronger towards the world from which he is temporarily severed. The world may have treated him very scurvily when he was in the midst of it. Its treatment of him may indeed have been so cruel, that this, and nothing else, impelled him to commit the crime for which he is incarcerated. Yet all this is for-

gotten. He remembers only its many graces: the charm of free breath in the open; the glint of unstinted sunshine; the voices of men and women, loud and unrestrained; the luxury of a good meal; the smiles in the eyes and on the lips of those whom he loves. He longs for the day when he shall be set outside his prison walls as, perhaps, heretofore, he has longed for nothing.

Not so the sight-seer in the thrall of his passion. He is comparable to the despot whose every wish is fulfilled, and who eventually, therefore, finds life so futile and joyless, that he despises it. Hence, like the despot of old, he is soon sure to be at the mercy of his evil passions. His system demands strong entertainment, or none at all.

But, it may be asked, is not this, after all, only a fancy portraiture? Surely we do not, in actual life, meet with men so perverted in disposition as this man? and by such means?

No; it is not merely a fancy portraiture. It is representative of a type that abounds. The colours may be strongly marked; that is all.

Of course a man does not carry his character on his sleeve, so that all who pass may read it. You would not think that the mild-faced person next to you in the compartment of a railway carriage was a murderer; and yet he might be. The science of thought-reading must become general, and an inherited instinct, ere we are able to form true conceptions of our neighbours. And it will then prove to be such an insufferable accomplishment that all civilisation will probably combine to banish its professors to Tristan d'Acunha, or some equally remote place, where their noxious influence may not be exercised.

Thus the man of the world, with no stationary interest, is, to the eye, and, possibly, to the convictions, very far indeed from being an objectionable person. He has his moods of amiability, like every one else. At such times he can stimulate the imagination of other people in the liveliest and most delightful manner. The statue of the Laocöon may be more communicative to you than it is to him; but he has seen it with his own eyes, whereas you have only read about it.

If, however, you bother him with questions about his theory of the interpretation of this statue, he will soon leave you to yourself. He really does not care two straws whether the old

priest is in the last agony precedent to death; whether he is making the empyrean echo with his screams of pain; or, whether the suffering of his face is due to his effort to suppress, as unmanly, the wails he is impelled of nature to utter. Ask him if he knows that the frog's legs he eats at Bignon's were snipped from the living frog, and he will shrug his shoulders with the like indifference. The *Laocœon* is what you please to make of it; the frog's legs are good. What more need be said? And so, if you would profit by his better moments, and the talent that is in him, you must allow our friend to be just what he is, and expect nothing more than he offers to you. He is like a variegated mosaic: agreeable enough as a work of art—the designs, coloured materials, and operatives for which may have come from afar—but not to be disturbed. If you dig up the mosaic, you destroy all. There is nothing but clods underneath.

It is when he is no longer young, when, indeed, he begins to grow old, that the professional sight-seer realises to the full that he has not done his duty to himself. What an active past he has lived, to be sure! Yet what has he to show for it?

Other men with whom he started in life on an equality, or even with points in his favour, are now in every way his betters. An hour's conversation with one of them humbles him to the dust. He has been sipping the honey; they have done the work. They have gained knowledge by actual intercourse with the world; strength by battling with it; wisdom through their double experience of the world's warfare and the world's ways. But he has spent his years skimming over the world's surface, indulging his curiosity. He is really no wiser than when he began his singular career; and he has attained the age when wisdom is to man what beauty is, in her prime, to woman. His rank among men is very low. His friends are astonished to find that it is so. He himself is appalled, enraged, humiliated to the core.

Nor is this the worst. He has spent his best years journeying for his amusement, so that he has never thought of matriculating in that school of self-sacrifice whence it is well to pass forth with honours. He has feared to give hostages to fortune in the guise of wife and children, lest his own pleasure should be imperilled. Fortune, now that she begins to tire of indulging him, has no inducement to withhold her

hand from vexing him. On the contrary, she acknowledges that it is his due; and if he has not thought of conciliating her on behalf of his later years, it is his affair, not hers: she cannot always favour him. I dare say, had our friend seen his own welfare more clearly, he would at the outset have rejected the career which he adopted. He would have chosen rather to practise self-sacrifice "as the last refinement of a judicious luxury." But it is now somewhat late in the day. He is keenly indisposed to face the trials with which matrimony is sure to confront him, much as he would like to be allied to a good and gentle woman, whose sole aim in life would be the advancement of his own happiness, and the warding off of the various arrows of discomfort which wing through the air to harass mankind. Nor has he very much that is acceptable to offer, on his own behalf, to the virtuous and gentle woman whom he would like to call his wife. The time is past. He has enjoyed by himself. He must now suffer by himself. He will do his best to avoid suffering—that may well be assumed—but he cannot escape the common lot. There is nothing that is enviable in the second half of his life, however much or little in the earlier half.

Our hapless friend in his old age—if he does nothing better—offers us, for our service, a very fine, though somewhat ancient moral. Here, as in other kindred tracks through life, a man, in effect, wrongs himself by following the path which he thinks promises to be merely the most agreeable. He pursues pleasure, and, when he has caught the butterfly, he crushes it in his hand. It is thus the old story. Had he not gone in such peremptory quest of happiness, he might have chanced to meet with happiness.

#### A LOYAL LADY.

IN those dark days of English history when King strove with Parliament—the "divine right" of the anointed sovereign with the just liberties of the subject—there were not wanting on either side noble instances of loyal heroism and steadfast self-devotion.

Lord Falkland, Sir John Elliot, Montrose, died on the battle-field, in prison, on the scaffold, for that which each deemed the right. These men, and many others like them, were the heroes of their time;



the same spirit animated them, though they met, sword in hand, to fight for opposed principles, rival interests. Each of these men did, or tried to do, his duty in the cruel confusion of the Civil Wars, and, whether he died for King or Parliament, he died nobly, and as a faithful soldier should; and his loyalty and devotion lit up the sombre annals of those troubled times with a glorious radiance which still shines through the pages of history.

England had her heroines, too, in those days of danger and privation: such devoted women as Mrs. Hutchinson and the eccentric Duchess of Newcastle. True, their "heroic actions" were not "performed publicly in the field," as the Duchess puts it, "but privately in the closet." Theirs was the womanly devotion of wifely love, the loyal courage of domestic self-sacrifice.

Such a heroine was Lady Anne Fanshawe, who, all unconsciously, has sketched her own character in her charmingly frank and unaffected "Autobiography." "It is a character," to quote Mr. Davenport Adams, "which one cannot but respect and admire. A tender and loving disposition was combined with a courageous heart; and her whole life, which was darkened at one time by many dangers and privations, was informed by a spirit of the truest and tenderest piety."

Anne Harrison, the eldest daughter of Sir John Harrison, of Balls, in the county of Herts, was born in St. Olave's, Hart Street, London, on the twenty-fifth of March, 1625; and there she passed the first fifteen winters of her life, until her mother's death in 1640. Her education had been wisely and carefully directed by this excellent lady, and all the advantages "that time afforded" were placed within her reach. Thanks to her mother's training, our heroine might well say with Portia:

Happier than this,  
She is not bred so dull but she can learn.

But Anne had an active nature, and loved riding and running. "In short," she says, "I was that which we grown people call a hoyting girl; but, to be just to myself, I never did mischief to myself or people, nor one immodest word or action in my life." With her mother's death came the consciousness of greater responsibility, and the "hoyting girl" began to reflect, and flung away "those little child-nesses which had formerly possessed her, and took charge of her father's house

and family, which she ordered to his entire satisfaction."

But troubled times were at hand. Her father espoused the Royal cause, and followed the Court to Oxford. Thither he summoned his daughters, for—with London in the hands of the Puritans—he did not think it safe for them to remain where they were. His estate had been sequestered by the Parliament, and they were reduced to great poverty: "living in a baker's house in an obscure street, and sleeping in a bad bed in a garret, with bad provisions, no money, and little clothes."

Such were the straits to which their devoted loyalty reduced the faithful followers of the King.

"We had the perpetual discourse," she says, "of losing and gaining towns and men; at the windows, the sad spectacle of war; sometimes plague, sometimes sicknesses of other kind, by reason of so many people being packed together, as, I believe, there never was before, of that quality; always in want, yet I must needs say, that most bore it with a martyr-like cheerfulness. For my own part, I began to think we should all, like Abraham, live in tents all the days of our lives."

On the 18th of May, 1644, Anne was married to Mr. Richard Fanshawe, a cultivated gentleman, and loyal Cavalier, she being then in her twentieth year, while her husband was about thirty-six. He had been appointed Secretary of War to the Prince of Wales, with a promise from the King that he should be preferred as soon as an opportunity offered; but "both his fortune," to quote his wife, "and my promised portion—which was made ten thousand pounds—were both at that time in expectation; and we might truly be called merchant adventurers, for the stock we set up our trading with did not amount to twenty pounds betwixt us. But, however, it was to us as a little piece of armour is against a bullet, which, if it be right placed, though no bigger than a shilling, serves as well as a whole suit of armour. So our stock bought pen, ink, and paper, which was your father's trade; and by it, I assure you, we lived better than those that were born to two thousand pounds a year, as long as he had his liberty."

Early in the following March, Mr. Fanshawe attended the Prince to Bristol. The circumstances under which he left his wife rendered this first separation peculiarly painful to them both:

"It was the first time we had parted a day since we married," she says, with pathetic simplicity. "He was extremely afflicted, even to tears, though passion was against his nature; but the sense of leaving me with a dying child—which did die two days after—in a garrison town, extremely weak, and very poor, were such circumstances as he could not bear with, only the argument of necessity. And, for my own part, it cost me so dear, that I was ten weeks before I could go alone. But he, by all opportunities, wrote to me to fortify myself; and that as soon as the Lords of the Council had their wives come to them, I should come to him; and that I should receive the first money he got, and hoped it would be suddenly. By the help of God, with these cordials, I recovered my former strength by little and little; nor did I, in my distressed condition, lack the conversation of many of my relations then in Oxford, and kindnesses of very many of the nobility and gentry."

Mrs. Fanshawe rejoined her husband in May, and in April, 1646, they accompanied the Prince to the Scilly Islands. Here the devoted pair endured hardships and sufferings that far surpassed any they had undergone at Oxford. The accommodation was wretched, and there were but three beds in the house which they occupied. The house itself consisted of two low rooms, and two little lofts, to which the sole access was by a ladder. One of these lofts—where the owner of the house kept the dried fish, in which he dealt—became the sleeping-quarters of Mr. Fanshawe's two clerks; while the other was occupied by "the rest of the servants." Of the two rooms, one was allotted to Mrs. Fanshawe's sister.

But, miserable as this lodging appeared, it had yet other drawbacks; for the first night our heroine slept there she felt intolerably cold, and discovered next morning that her bed "was near swimming with the sea." This, however, the owner reassuringly informed her, "it never did but at spring-tide." Moreover, they were practically destitute of all the necessities of life, having neither clothes, meat, nor fuel; and, to quote Mr. Davenport Adams, "May be said to have begged their daily bread of God, for they thought every meal their last." Well may he add: "The loyalty which, without murmur, endured these privations, must, after all, have been something more than a sentiment; it may be said almost to have assumed the proportions of a religion."

After various wanderings, Mr. Fanshawe's employment in the Prince's service ceased; and his wife came to England, where she succeeded in obtaining permission for her husband to compound for his estates in the sum of three hundred pounds, and also to return. Thus it fell to his lot to wait frequently upon the King during his detention at Hampton Court, where Mrs. Fanshawe also went three times to pay her duty to the captive monarch. "The last time I ever saw him," she says, "when I took my leave, I could not refrain weeping. When he had saluted me, I prayed to God to preserve His Majesty with long life and happy years. He stroked me on the cheek and said: 'Child, if God pleaseth, it shall be so; but both you and I must submit to God's will, and you know what hands I am in.' Then, turning to Mr. Fanshawe, he said: 'Be sure, Dick, to tell my son all that I have said, and deliver those letters to my wife; pray God bless her! I hope I shall do well.' And taking him in his arms, said: 'Thou hast ever been an honest man, and I hope God will bless thee, and make thee a happy servant to my son, whom I have charged in my letter to continue his love and trust to you,' adding, 'I do promise you that, if ever I am restored to my dignity, I will bountifully reward you both for your service and sufferings.' Thus did we part from that glorious man, that within a few months after was murdered, to the grief of all Christians that were not forsaken by God."

In the following October, on the day before their embarkation from Portsmouth, the Fanshawes had a narrow escape. They were walking by the seaside, when two Dutch men-of-war shot bullets at them so near that they heard them whistle past. On this Mrs. Fanshawe called to her husband to make haste back, and very prudently began to run; but he never altered his pace, merely remarking, calmly: "If we must be killed, it were as good to be killed walking as running." Some time later, they passed six weeks in Paris, where they received much gratifying notice from Queen Henrietta Maria and the loyal and noble exiles who formed her suite. At Calais, the Governor feasted them very hospitably, and much excellent discourse passed—the largest share of the talking being done by Sir Kenelm Digby, who indulged in extraordinary narratives, to the mingled astonishment and admiration of the

French company at table. "The concluding one was that barnacles, a bird in Jersey, was first a shell-fish to appearance, and from that, sticking upon old wood, became in time a bird. After some consideration, they unanimously burst out into laughter, believing it altogether false; and, to say the truth," adds Mrs. Fanshawe, with delicious ignorance, "it was the only thing true he had discoursed with them."

After our heroine had again ventured to England, in the hope of raising money for her sorely-pressed family, she and her children rejoined Mr. Fanshawe in Ireland, where, for six months, the wanderers enjoyed a well-earned repose, which must have been welcome indeed to the wife—not yet twenty-five years of age—who in her short married life had passed through so many terrible experiences, and borne so much suffering with such quiet courage and heroic endurance.

The respite was of brief duration. Cromwell landed in Ireland, and crushed the unhappy country with an iron hand. Cork declared for the Commonwealth in November, 1649. Mr. Fanshawe was away at Kinsale, and his wife, who was lying ill in bed with a broken wrist, had to face this unexpected danger alone.

"At midnight," she says, "I heard the great guns go off, and thereupon I called up my family to rise, which I did as well as I could in that condition. Hearing lamentable shrieks of men, women, and children, I asked at a window the cause. They told me they were all Irish, stripped and wounded, and turned out of the town; and that Colonel Jeffries, with some others, had possessed themselves of the town for Cromwell. Upon this I immediately wrote a letter to my husband . . . persuading him to patience and hope that I should get safely out of the town . . . and desired him to shift for himself . . . with the promise that I would secure his papers.

"So soon as I had finished my letter I sent it by a faithful servant, who was let down the garden wall of Red Abbey, and, sheltered by the darkness of the night, he made his escape."

Mrs. Fanshawe next packed her husband's papers, money, and other things of value:

"And then, about three o'clock in the morning, by the light of a taper, and in that pain I was in, I went into the marketplace with only a man and maid, and,

passing through an unruly tumult, with their swords in their hands, searched for their chief commander, Jeffries. . . . He instantly wrote me a pass . . . and said he would never forget the respect he owed Mr. Fanshawe. With this I came through thousands of naked swords to Red Abbey, and hired the next neighbour's cart, which carried all that I could remove; and myself, sister, and little girl, Nan, with three maids and two men, set forth at five o'clock, in November, having but two horses amongst us all, which we rid on by turns . . . but by little and little, I thank God, we got safe to the garrison, where I found your father."

In February, 1650, Mr. Fanshawe and his wife embarked on board a Dutch ship for Malaga. But a Turkish galley bearing down on the ship, the captain called for arms, and cleared the deck, resolving to fight.

"This," as Mrs. Fanshawe says, "was sad for us passengers; but my husband bid us women be sure to keep in the cabin, and not appear, which would make the Turks think that we were a man-of-war; but if they saw women, they would take us for merchants and board us. He went upon the deck, and took a gun and bandoliers and sword, and, with the rest of the ship's company, stood upon deck expecting the arrival of the Turkish man-of-war. This beast, the captain, had locked me up in the cabin. I knocked and called long to no purpose, until, at length, the cabin-boy came and opened the door. I, all in tears, desired him to be as good as to give me his blue and brown cap he wore, and his tarred coat, which he did, and I gave him half-a-crown; and putting them on, and flinging away my night-clothes, I crept up softly and stood upon deck by my husband's side, as free from sickness and fear as, I confess, from discretion; but it was the effect of that passion which I could never master.

"By this time the two vessels were engaged in parley, and so well-satisfied with speech and sight of each other's forces, that the Turk's man-of-war tacked about, and we continued our course. But when your father saw it convenient to retreat, looking upon me, he blessed himself, and snatched me up in his arms, saying, 'Good God! that love can make this change!' And though he seemingly chid me, he would laugh at it as often as he remembered that voyage."

Again was this noble wife's devotion to

be shown under circumstances that read more like a chapter out of some romance, than a page of sober history: Sir Richard Fanshawe—created a Baronet for his services in Spain—was taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester, and conveyed to London. For ten weeks he was closely confined in Whitehall, in constant expectation of death. At four, every morning, his wife made her way from her lodging in Chancery Lane to his prison. She came alone, and on foot, a dark lantern in her hands. Standing beneath his window, she called him softly; and he, answering, would put his head out, and hold sweet converse with her, directing her how to intercede for his life and liberty with Cromwell. These efforts were at last successful, and Sir Richard was released on bail; when he and his family enjoyed some years of well-earned rest.

On the happy restoration of their exiled monarch, Sir Richard again took part in public affairs; and when Lady Fanshawe waited on the King the morning after his arrival at Whitehall, Charles received her congratulations very graciously, and assured her of his Royal favour, at the same time presenting her husband with his portrait set in diamonds.

This loyal lady and devoted wife died in 1679–80, having survived her husband several years. Englishwomen may well be proud of one whose simple courage and unpretending heroism shed such lustre on their name.

#### ODDITIES OF EATING AND DRINKING.

WHAT ought man to eat? In other words, what is man's proper food? A more embarrassing question could hardly be put. One man, blessed with an accommodating appetite, eats anything and everything which he can get, and finds all good; another picks and chooses and wastes; and some get so little of anything, that they are thankful to eat whatever comes in their way, and still do not eat too much. The difficulty is not to give a list of things which man eats in some part of the world or another, but to make out a list of things which he never uses for food. Everything that lives and moves in the air, in the earth under our feet, on the ground, or in the water, has been at some time or other eaten and relished. The vegetable world has yielded its

treasures in the richest profusion for man's food; and not content with eating fruit, leaves, and flowers, he has found out that bark, roots, and grass can, at a pinch, take the place of more tempting viands, to say nothing of occasional banquets on his fellow-man.

"The Voyage of the *Jeannette*," a charming work, edited by Emma de Long, the widow of the heroic Lieutenant-Commander of that ill-fated ship, contains a touching account of the sufferings of the expedition: "At last, on October the third, they had to kill their solitary dog. On they struggled with stout hearts, but feeble limbs, burdened now with a dying comrade, who, some days later, relieved his mess-mates of a burden they could ill support. They buried him in the ice by the river-side with such naval honours as their slender resources permitted. Solid food was now all gone. For the next fortnight we meet with entries like these: 'October the seventh, for dinner we had one ounce of alcohol in a pot of tea, made from old tea-leaves.' 'October the tenth, last half-ounce of alcohol; eat deerskin scraps. Yesterday cut my deerskin foot-nips.' Then they had nothing for some days but a spoonful of glycerine. When that was finished they tried infusion of willow-leaves. The last mention of food is under date of October the fifteenth. 'Breakfast: willow-tea and two old boots.'" The rescuing parties found the diary near the dead body of the unfortunate Commander. It abounds in passages of the deepest interest and pathos.

As long as meat is eaten, one cannot see the smallest objection to horse-flesh, providing it is not diseased. Horses are brought to table and relished in many countries, and our neighbours across the Channel consider them wholesome; and the consumption is rapidly increasing. The "British Medical Journal," not long ago, very unnecessarily, as it seemed to me, protested against the exposure at Lambeth, when Mr. Stevenson, the Sanitary Inspector of Camberwell, came before Mr. Partridge, the magistrate, with regard to the seizure of a ton and a half of horse-flesh, intended, as he supposed, for human food. The Inspector had seen a horse slaughtered, and parts of its carcase packed in canvas coverings, and put into a van. He followed in a cab, keeping the van in sight, till it pulled up at a shop in the London Road, where a side door was opened and a parcel of horse-flesh delivered.



The van was next driven to other places, and parcels were left—one at a beer-house.

Mr. Stevenson followed the van back to Linnell Road. The place was watched for some time, and admission obtained. In a loft, a quantity of what appeared to be horse-flesh was found, covered with a cloth. On the Inspector enquiring what it was, he was told:

"It is horse-flesh, and I am going to send it to Holland."

The speaker added that it was excellent for food, and that he had had a good steak from it.

Mr. Partridge asked the defendant if he wished to say anything in his defence. He replied that every parcel was sweet and good.

Mr. Partridge then enquired if it was for human food.

The defendant replied: "I don't know what they do with it when it gets to Holland."

The magistrate said he should fill up an order for the destruction of the flesh, and, when application was made, a summons would be granted against the defendant.

This abridged report shows that horse-flesh is wholesome, and that a certain trade is springing up in London; and why, let me ask, should it not? It may not be as cheap as some other kinds of food, but it is unobjectionable; and, were the law not to interfere, a good demand for it would arise, especially among the foreigners who, in increasingly large numbers, are settling in the metropolis.

A sort of cheap food, to which no objection can be urged, is snails; and the following letter interested me a good deal. It was signed "Vivarium," and was dated Torquay:

"Had the writer of the paragraph on 'Snails as Food,' which you have published, ever lived in the West of England, he would not have been so positive in his reference to the 'powerful national prejudice' of Englishmen to this nutritious and palatable article. Over a wide area, of which Bristol is the centre, through the winter, the common, large garden snail is a profitable, marketable article; and hundreds of bushels are sent to Bristol every week from the surrounding districts; the value averaging six shillings per bushel. At most oyster-shops and fish-stalls, 'wall-fish'—as prepared snails are called—are on sale. They are boiled and sold with-

out their shells, and flavoured with vinegar and pepper, a penny a dozen. They are not unlike the common whelk. The evident relish with which the 'sons of toil' devour the tasty morsels, goes far in their favour. I have been assured by many working men that there is nothing more enjoyable and staying than a good meal of 'wall-fish.' Men may often be seen in Somerset, poking short, pointed sticks into the crevices of the stone walls, so abundant in that county, collecting snails; which are also found hibernating in banks and hollow trunks of trees. I have many times had them brought to my door for sale, 'fresh picked,' in the same way that blackberries are hawked about in rural districts. Snails are not eaten during the summer, as they are then considered to be unpalatable and gross."

This objection to them in summer is said to be without sufficient reason.

Horse-flesh and snails! "Well," vegetarians will exclaim, "what next? If these are wholesome foods, which are unwholesome?"

The "Horticultural Times," some little time ago, praised the onion in rather warm terms. Unfortunately, the pungent smell of this excellent vegetable makes it particularly offensive to many people; but few will deny that some palates are not favourably disposed to its pronounced flavour. Still, vegetarians assure us that "onions are diaphoretic, carminative, and soporific; diaphoretic—increasing the secretion of the cutaneous glands; carminative—training up the stomach, and assisting in digestion; soporific—quieting the nerves, and inducing sleep"—though why the organs of a healthy body should be stimulated to do extra work, I cannot quite see.

Human ingenuity probably never went farther than in some of the adulterations now perpetrated. What does the reader say to gooseberry jelly made entirely from seaweed? This is a fraud which the Paris Municipal Laboratory has brought to light. It is coloured with fuchsine, or some similar material; and the flavour is given by five parts of acetic ether, four of tartaric acid, one of succinic acid, and one of aldehyde, and cœnanthic ether. This is, perhaps, happily capped by the following amusing story, which, however, I fear is not very new: It is related of a milkman in Boston, U.S.A., that a report had become current among his customers that his cows were suffering from disease; and on

presenting himself one morning at a customer's door, he was informed of this by the lady, who told him that, under the circumstances, she did not wish him to leave any milk for the present. "Bless you, ma'am," he replied, "my milk never saw a cow." We are not told the effect of this reassuring statement on the lady, but we can imagine it.

John Ramsay, of Ochtertyre, informs us in the work recently edited by Alexander Allardyce, that the breakfasts of the Scottish gentry at the beginning of the last century differed widely from those of our day, and consisted of callops, fish, cold meat, eggs, milk-pottage, etc., to which was added water-gruel—"skink," a species of soup peculiar to Scotland—strong ale, or a glass of wine-and-water.

As a specimen of simple living, not accompanied by high thinking, however, the following passage, from a lecture by Professor Flower on the extinct Tasmanians, is worth studying:

"They were," he says, "quite ignorant of the potter's art, and had no vessels for holding water, except pieces of bark or shells. Their cooking was, therefore, of the most primitive kind, consisting chiefly of roasting on the embers of the fires, though their food was considerably varied, for nothing that was edible among the natural productions of the island, animal or vegetable, but seems to have served its turn on occasion. Kangaroos, opossums, bandicoots, wombats, seals, stranded whales, birds, lizards, snakes, ants, grubs, eggs, shell-fish, roots, seeds, some few fruits, and several species of fungi, are enumerated as ministering to their wants. Their sole drink was water, as, unlike the large majority of people even low in the scale of civilisation, no kind of intoxicating beverage had been discovered; and they knew not the luxury, with all its attendant evils, of tobacco, or of any corresponding narcotic for smoking. There is, moreover, no evidence that they ever resorted to cannibalism."

Mr. Charles Augustus Murray, in his charming "Travels in North America," in 1834-5-6, gave a lively description of the average routine of a Cuban dinner, which, he says, was as follows:

"First a soup, either of vermicelli or vegetables, generally containing a good deal of bread; then comes the pride of Spain, the olla, a kind of bouilli, which is eaten with a mixed dish of vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, cabbage, and a kind of

pea—the last is apt to be large, yellow, tough, and dry; then several dishes of hash and 'emincé,' mostly dressed with eggs, and flavoured with garlic and onions; fried plantain, yams, and Irish or Guernsey potatoes, are on the table; two large dishes of rice occupy an important place; one plain-boiled, another flavoured with the gravy of two or three fowls, which are boiled in it, and also seasoned with garlic. Among the favourite side-dishes are dried beef, grated and served up warm with sauce; cotelette de mouton; a dish of boiled and seasoned tripe, or 'pied de veaux' and small croquettes of brains; the last are very good. When all these trifles have been disposed of, the attention of the company is called to roast guinea-fowl, roast turkey, and sometimes a dish of fish; but unless the house be close to the sea, the last is rarely presented, as it is impossible, owing to the climate, to keep it fresh many hours. I need not add that, in a Catholic country, there are also several modes of serving it up salted. Then, after all these skirmishes have been disposed of, comes the tug of war, in the shape of a joint of beef at the top, and another of roast mutton at the bottom, and a large salad in the middle. The beef is generally poor in flavour; but the mutton is excellent, although they commit the error, common to the whole western world, of killing it too young, and are generally obliged to eat it a few hours after it is killed; notwithstanding these disadvantages it is sweet, tender, and well-flavoured. If the dinner is given according to the real Criollo fashion, the party here breaks up and retires for a quarter of an hour to the garden, or to the shady wooden galleries round the house, where the gentlemen light their cigars and the ladies chat among themselves. After this quarter of an hour's rest, the black major-domo again summons the guests to table, when dessert is served, generally accompanied by a cheese from Old or New England. Here the richness and fertility of the island is fully displayed; the number and variety of the sweetmeats is perfectly astonishing. It is useless to record the names of all the fruits—even if I knew them—because many of them are totally unknown in Britain, and their names are untranslatable into our language.

"Some of these fruits are as follows: Mammees, about the size and shape of a small melon; Guana vana, a large fruit with prickly rind, chiefly used in making

ice or sherbet; Sapote, called in Jamaica star-apple, something like a brown beurre pear, called in English 'Bury' pear; Cannito, a small fruit containing a sweet brownish purple pulp and two or three stones; Papaya—the pawpaw of Jamaica—this fruit is similar to, but ten times as large as that which goes by the same name in America; Naranjas de China and other varieties of oranges, as well as sweet lemons and limes.

"I have tasted them all, and have found none so pleasant to my palate as the one so familiar to sweetmeat lovers in England, under the name of Guava jelly. We have treated this word with much leniency, considering our usual habits when we naturalise names, as we have only lopped off one syllable, its proper designation being Guayava.

"Other dishes there are, however, the very sight or description of which might make the youthful inhabitants of a nursery or the mischievous tenantry of a boarding-school, male or female, lick their lips for half an hour: such as sweet cakes of maize, eaten with the purest extract of sugar, resembling molasses, and called here 'miel'; grated cocoa-nut bathed in lemon or citron syrup; a kind of marmalade made from the mammees fruit; various preparations of 'ciruelas,' or preserved plums; and many others, which I am unwilling to note down, lest some unfortunate master or miss should happen to cast his or her eye on this page and 'pine with vain desire' for these transatlantic sweets.

"The dessert being disposed of, coffee is served, generally without milk, and the lords of creation again betake themselves to their cigars. Such is a tolerably correct description of an average Cuban dinner-party. There is one part of the dietetic system in this island, which, although perfectly new to me, pleased me after the first few days very much. The dinner is generally about half-past two or three o'clock, and, after it, nothing more is eaten till bed-time, when a cup of hot 'café au lait' is offered to those who choose it. This abstinence during the later hours of the evening, is conducive to health; it makes sleep light and refreshing, and the sleeper wakes early in the morning with a cool head and a clear eye."

As a companion picture to this Cuban feast, let us consider the diet of rich Orientals. Eastern diet differs very much from that of Europeans, which will account for the dislike—might we say repugnance?

—which the Shah exhibits for English dinners. According to Dr. W. F. Ainsworth, whose interesting articles on "Food and Cookery in the East" were, a year ago, published in "Diet and Hygiene," the following may be taken as an average Eastern menu: The first dish is almost constantly soup and the "pilau," the intermediate courses consisting of a variety of dishes. Among the more common and characteristic are mutton, in small pieces, roasted on iron skewers, with slices of apple, or artichoke bottoms, and onions between the pieces; mutton minced small, and beaten up with spices into balls, and roasted on skewers; mutton, or lamb, stewed with gourds, roots, or herbs; fowls, pigeons, and sometimes quails, or other birds, boiled or roast, but more frequently made into ragouts. A favourite dish consists of mutton, rice, pistachios, currants, pine-nuts, almonds, suet, spice, and garlic, which are enveloped in a cucumber or gourd; in the absence of either of these vegetables, the savoury mess is wrapped in the leaves of vine, endive, beet, or borage. Sometimes a lamb is stuffed in the same way, and roasted whole. Minced meat, generally mutton, with pomegranate seeds, is spread on thin cakes, and baked on an iron plate. A great variety of pies, and sweet dishes made with honey, or the juice of grapes, and pastry, help to fill up the banquet. A few plates of sweet flummery are served as dessert; and last of all appears a large bowl of "kushaf," which is a decoction of dried figs, currants, apricots, cherries, apples, and other fruit, made into a thin syrup, with pistachio-nuts, almonds, or some slices of the fruit swimming in the liquor. This compound is served cold as a drink.

When man is compelled to live simply and inexpensively, he submits cheerfully, and often thrives. Of this the best proof I can find is a passage throwing a very painful light on the sufferings of Major Greely in the famous Arctic expedition. Perhaps, however, my readers had better first learn something as to the intensity of Arctic cold, and then they will better understand what Greely and his companions endured. "It was piercingly cold; a bitter wind swept across the snow, making us glad to find even this poor shelter against the coming night. Two hours after dark the thermometer stood at minus thirty-eight degrees, or seventy degrees of frost. Oh, what misery it was! On again, next morning, over the trackless plain; thermo-

meter at twenty degrees in morning, and twelve degrees at midday, with high wind, snow, and heavy drift. After four days of very arduous travel, we reached Carlton at sunset on the twelfth of January. The thermometer had kept varying between twenty degrees and thirty-eight degrees below zero every night; but on the night of the twelfth surpassed anything I had yet experienced. I spent that night in a room at Carlton, a room in which a fire had been burning until midnight; nevertheless, at daybreak on the thirteenth, the thermometer showed twenty degrees on the table close to my bed. At half-past ten o'clock, when placed outside, facing north, it fell to forty-four degrees; and I afterwards ascertained that an instrument kept at the mission of Prince Albert, sixty miles east from Carlton, showed the enormous amount of fifty-one degrees below zero at daybreak that morning, eighty-three degrees below freezing-point. This was the coldest night during the winter; but it was clear, calm, and fine." This remarkable passage is taken from one of Sir William Butler's well-known works on Canada.

"From the time of landing at Cape Sabine, the record of Greely's party is one of daily-increasing wretchedness and starvation. October the ninth they found a record of the loss of the 'Proteus,' the first steamer sent to their relief. The stores left for them were small in quantity, and the bread was mouldy and uneatable. The rations were gradually reduced to the lowest amount possible for sustaining life, until, on November the first, they consisted of about six ounces of bread, four of meat, and four of vegetables per man. At this rate it was calculated there would be sufficient to last till March the first. After that, ten days' rations would remain, of ten ounces of bread, ten of pemmican, and a small quantity of tea, on which to cross Smith Sound by sledge. It may be imagined that this slow starvation caused murmuring and insubordination among some of the men; the doctor reporting that health and strength could not be maintained upon it. And if we compare it with the starvation rations of Captain McClure, when relieved by Lieutenant—now Admiral—Bedford Pym, we shall more clearly realise the dreadful hunger which must have been suffered by Greely's party. Captain McClure's men were, when found, receiving half a pound of meat and two pounds of flour daily, and were even

then so ravenous as to watch the division with lynx-eyed vigilance, lest a crumb should be extracted; and Lieutenant Bedford Pym said: 'The hungry looks on all sides of me are very painful.' Many also were suffering from scurvy. What then could Lieutenant Greely's party expect, when, in addition to rations so meagre, they were without sufficient shelter, and had to face a dearth of fuel for cooking? Lieutenant Lockwood, one of the bravest of the party, writes: 'This is miserable. We have insufficient supplies of everything. Even the blubber will support but one poor light, and that hardly for the winter. We must rely on the whale-boat and the barrel-staves mostly for fuel; the alcohol being almost exhausted. Cold, dampness, darkness, and hunger are our portions every day and all day. Here, in the boat, one has to grope in the darkness to find anything laid down.' Further on he says: 'Occupied some time this morning in scraping like a dog in the place where the moulded dog-biscuits were emptied. Found a few crumbs, and ate mould and all.' Thus they passed through the terrible weeks of darkness, during which one of their number, Sergeant Elison, became so terribly frost-bitten as eventually to lose both his feet and his hands. Then scurvy claimed its victims; insubordination grew worse and worse; petty thefts of food became frequent; and death began to run riot among the handful of brave men, left apparently to their fate by a forgetful country. Yet their Commander, with a load of anxiety on his shoulders too heavy to be borne, could try to keep up the flagging spirits of his men, by talking to them day after day, as they lay, cold and hungry, in their sleeping-bags, on various subjects, or reading to them by the light of the solitary Eskimo lamp—even the oil for which was begrudged as wasted food. Occasionally foxes were shot and consumed, the entrails being added to the stew for flavour. And on November the twenty-ninth, the feast of thanksgiving was celebrated with six pounds of rice, five of raisins, two of extract of coffee and chocolate, and two of milk; the record reading: 'To-day we have been almost satisfied, and had almost enough to eat.' November the thirtieth it was observed that the temperature was three degrees, the first time it had been above zero during the month. December the fourteenth it is noted that so many foxes had been shot as to admit



of one being added each week to the mess; but as these foxes weighed only four or five pounds, it added only about a third of an ounce to each man's allowance in the week. From this time they struggled on, dying one by one, the rations being reduced to the lowest point possible; everything being consumed, even articles of clothing made of seal-skin. April the sixth, Rice and Frederick started, on a ration of six ounces of bread and six of pemmican, in a sledge in search of one hundred pounds of meat, which had been abandoned; but they could not find it, and the former died of exposure and exhaustion. All now they had to depend upon was such game as they could shoot, chiefly ptarmigan and doves, and shrimps, of which they caught many pounds. April the eleventh they succeeded in killing a bear and a small seal; but after that no game could be obtained, and May the fifteenth the last of the rations were consumed. After this, the survivors maintained life on shrimps, seaweed, and saxifrage. 'How we live,' says the record, 'I do not know, unless it is because we are determined to.' At this time, the sole subsistence of the party consisted of lichens, seaweed, and saxifrage, supplemented by articles of clothing made of seal-skin."

The moral of all this is that the human appetite is well-nigh omnivorous, and can dispose of almost anything, as far as quality goes; it is not less remarkable for the large and, as I have shown, when compelled by privation to restrict itself, small quantities of food it is satisfied with. Of its occasionally boundless capacity, the subjoined quotation from one of the Rev. Dr. Augustus Jessop's delightful papers is a proof:

"Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Aylsham lived a certain Jerry Eke, whose appetite was said to be superhuman, and whose prowess at harvest suppers was the boast, and wonder, and envy of the villagers round. It came to pass that, at a farmers' market dinner, the talk turned upon Mr. Eke's performances, when some one present protested that what had been narrated was impossible. 'Impossible!' said another, 'I'll bet you five pounds Jerry Eke will eat a calf at a sitting.' The wager was taken and the preliminaries were arranged. The calf—let us hope only a baby calf—was killed; the bones were removed, the flesh was cut into minute particles, and apportioned into seventeen enormous pasties, whose outer

crust was a thin film of batter made lovely and tempting to every sense, but carefully kept from any ingredients that could cloy the palate. Jerry was called in, he having agreed to the wager with evident delight, and was told he might fall to. He did so, and steadily gorged. He had made no difficulty of the first nine pasties; but when a tenth was brought in he seemed to flag. To the horror of his backers, he sighed and looked perplexed. It was but for a moment; he desired only to exultate: 'I say, mas'r, I ain't got nothing to say agin them pays, I loik 'em amazin'; but I'm a-thinkin' et's abaywt time as I should begin upon that ther calf!'"

Of what it can do when abstinence is enforced, I need only say that two pounds of bread a day kept many a poor Lancashire cotton-spinner alive during the memorable Famine; but that would be an enormous allowance compared with the amounts that have occasionally sustained life. Perhaps one of the most startling instances on record—though, no doubt, it could be paralleled by the privations of other shipwrecks and long battling with the waves—was that of Captain Bligh and his men. These unfortunates were set adrift in boats, near the Friendly Islands, and from the end of April to the close of May subsisted on a daily allowance of one-twenty-fifth of a pound of biscuit apiece, with a quarter of a pint of water, and occasionally a teaspoonful or two of rum. This last was, a hundred years ago, regarded as a valuable food, or adjunct to food; but, in our more enlightened age, we should question whether alcohol in any form would assist digestion, and many authorities would contend that its use is actually injurious; however that may be, two-thirds of an ounce of biscuit and a quarter of a pint of water would hardly make a mouthful for a ploughman. This quantity would represent only one-twelfth of the daily waste of the body, so that, before long, the system would use up all its reserve force, and death would inevitably take place. The mildness of the climate, however, had much to do with diminishing the requirements of the system.

We must not be too hard upon poor Northern savages whose exploits equal those of the Aylsham labourer, for the intense severity of their winter cold demands enormous quantities of food, and when they are withheld, death speedily takes place; still, we must confess that

Eskimos, Greenlanders, and Yahuts are blessed with healthy and accommodating appetites.

The "Edinburgh Medical Journal," of 1857-8, gave the following humorous recipe for the preparation of homœopathic broth; no one need complain of its richness or fulness of flavour, and with this quotation I shall end my paper:

Take a robin's leg,  
Mind, the drumstick merely,  
Put it in a tub  
Filled with water nearly;  
Set it out of doors  
In a place that's shady;  
Let it stand a week;  
Three days, if for a lady;  
Drop a spoonful of it  
In a five-pail kettle,  
Which may be made of tin  
Or any baser metal;  
Fill the kettle up,  
Set it on a-boiling,  
Skim the liquor well  
To prevent it oiling;  
One atom add of salt,  
For the thick'ning one rice-kernel,  
And use to light the fire  
The "Homœopathic Journal."  
Let the liquor boil  
Half-an-hour, no longer;  
If 'tis for a man  
Of course you'll make it stronger:  
Should you now desire  
That the soup be flavoured,  
Stir it once around  
With a stalk of savoury.  
When the broth is made  
Nothing can excel it;  
Then, three times a day,  
Let the patient smell it.  
If he chance to die  
Say 'twas nature did it;  
If he chance to live  
Give the soup the credit.

## THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold,"  
"Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I. THE CURSE.

A CURSE was once laid on a man:

"It shall never leave you. It shall live through your living and sleeping. It shall be at your board, and go out with you into the streets. It shall poison your joys, and make blacker your sorrows. It shall watch over you, lying in wait for each moment of your mortal weakness, and it shall fall on you and overwhelm you in that hour when you, seemingly having triumphed over all dangers and fears, shall find life sweeter than ever it has been before."

A hideous curse for a man to carry with him through his days. Yet the sin that

had evoked it was more hideous. A human life ruined—a human soul lost.

A murder, foul and dastardly—no less a murder because it was not his hands which had thrust that poor, desperate outcast, mad with shame, and want, and doubt of all things good in heaven and earth, into the black waters of a great city's river.

A father had laid his curse on this man.

It was a bright, frosty day in December. Riverbridge—a queer, old-fashioned town in one of the Midland Counties—looked quite lively and cheerful in the sunlight, for it was early yet in the afternoon.

Brend Aston—"Brend Aston on the Bridge," he was often called, his house being built close to the bridge which spanned the river, which, lower down, turned the water-wheel of his flour-mills—had been out into the country that morning. He was returning now to his luncheon, when he was stopped on the bridge by a middle-aged man, with a shrewd, pleasant face—the chief doctor of Riverbridge.

Brend Aston—tall, rather slightly built, with clean-shaven face, grave eyes, and well-cut mouth—was considered by many to be a very handsome man. His complexion, originally fair as a woman's, was tanned a healthy clear brown, by the constant exposure to the sun and air of a country life. His hair being very fair and also closely-cropped to his head, prevented the grey hairs being so visible, and this added still more to the youth of his appearance.

The first glance at his light, well-built figure, his fair hair, his active gait, made him look ten years younger than his actual age, which was forty-four. But there were times when, in revenge, he looked much older. This moment was one of them, though he was smiling as he talked to his friend on the bridge. But the smile on his lips had not reached his eyes, and it was this occasional discrepancy of light and shade on his face, which made some people deny his title to be called handsome. Indeed, some even affirmed that he, when powerfully and disagreeably moved, was positively ugly. But then, only a very few people in Riverbridge had seen that look on his face which called forth such an unflattering assertion.

"My dear Aston, you were a perfect fool! I told you so at the time. What was the use of your helping a drunken,

degraded brute like Wilton? It was throwing your money into the gutter."

"It seemed hard not to give the fellow a chance."

Aston roused himself to answer as the Doctor at last came to a stop, choked by his anger and scorn.

"But it wasn't giving him a chance, unless you mean of sending him to the devil a little faster than he's already going. Shut him up in a room of your mill, and give him neither food to eat nor brandy to drink, and you will at least have the chance of improving him one way."

"By improving him off the face of the earth altogether!" with that same half-smile on his face. But his voice was weary, as if he were tired of the subject. The Doctor saw it, and changed the subject.

After all, if Aston chose to fling away his money by setting up in business a sot like Charles Wilton, it was his own account. The result had been just what the Doctor and all his other friends had foretold. Wilton's promises of reform had been the usual drunkard's resolutions.

The business had gone to rack and ruin; and, at the present moment, Wilton was in the town infirmary, suffering from a violent attack of delirium tremens, in which he had first tried to cut his wife's throat, and, failing that, had succeeded in making a considerable incision into his own. The Doctor had just come from the infirmary, where he had been visiting him.

"So I hear you expect your ward to-morrow," he said, changing the topic, and looking rather keenly at Aston.

Aston seemed to read something in the look; for he laughed, though the slight flush that deepened his colour was one rather of impatient irritation, than the amused consciousness of a man who had had set down to him for years, every girl of Riverbridge as soon as she arrived at young lady-hood.

"You'll have to do it some time!" said the Doctor, hearing only the laugh, and glancing away from the handsome figure, across the low parapet of the bridge to the great flour-mills which faced them down the stream curving at that point rather sharply round to the right.

These flour-mills made Aston one of the richest men in the neighbourhood.

"It isn't at all likely it will ever happen," said Aston, shortly. "Certainly, if it did, it would not——" He stopped,

feeling the indelicacy of discussing such a matter about a girl who was coming, dependent on his care and protection, to his house. "Miss Garth is a mere school-girl," he added, with the touch of cold haughtiness his friends rarely felt.

"I didn't mean to be impertinent," said the Doctor, pleasantly, sorry for his careless jesting. "But you know there is always a little romance about a good-looking guardian and a pretty ward."

"I don't know about 'pretty,'" said Aston with a laugh, softened by the pleasant apology, for he and the Doctor were great friends. "When I saw her in Germany, two years ago, she was the plainest, gawkiest girl I had ever met."

The Doctor knew what two years can sometimes do for a girl's appearance, but said no more, not wishing to disturb his friend still more. He knew he was already perplexed enough by the coming of this ward into his bachelor's establishment.

"I'm going up to town to-morrow morning," he went on. "Can I be any use as an escort to Miss Garth?"

"Thank you," answered Aston, "but I am going up to-night. I shall run down to Dover to-morrow to meet her boat."

With a nod of farewell, the Doctor went on his way, leaving Aston standing on the bridge.

"Confound them for a gossiping crew!" exclaimed the latter to himself, generously comprehending all Riverbridge in his epithet. "Of course, they'll begin all this tomfoolery directly she arrives to-morrow. The order of the ceremony, even to the size of the bridal bouquet, will be arranged before the week is out. Shall we have a wedding-breakfast or not? Or, shall we wear our noses, or leave them at home? Hang them all!"

A few yards brought him to his house, the side wall of which was built close to the end of the bridge. It stood on the right-hand of the street. It was a queer, old-fashioned house. Outside, with its plain walls, and windows set level with them, it looked something like a mill itself; especially as there was very little attempt at decorating the windows with curtains or lace blinds. He opened the hall-door, and entered. Then, just on its threshold, came to a sudden stop.

It was an awkward hall. The staircase, to the right-hand, began almost immediately, leaving little more space than was sufficient for the width of the drawing-

room door, which lay also to the right. The staircase, beginning thus abruptly, left only a narrow passage, which, however, opened again at the further end into another hall—square, stone-flagged, with a picturesque window. On the right-hand of this were kitchen and cellars; and on the left, the dining-room. In this second hall, just facing the passage, and, therefore, immediately opposite the front-door, stood a young lady. She was dressed in hat and jacket, and was in the act of lifting a bundle of wraps from a table which stood against the window.

Even in the midst of his dismay and bewilderment, Aston saw that something unpleasant had taken place. He thought of his housekeeper, and hurried forward. It was as he suspected. The housekeeper, with a very disagreeable look on her face, was standing a few yards from the kitchen door. She had evidently been mutinous, and the girl, with her flashing eyes and brilliant colour, had resented it. Both women started as he came forward.

"Miss Garth!" he exclaimed. "I did not expect you to-day! I was coming to meet you to-morrow, as it was arranged. Jane," turning to the housekeeper, with an indescribable change in his voice which made it as hard as steel, "I hope Miss Garth's room is ready for her."

Jane came forward, and, lifting the bundle of wraps, went down the passage towards the staircase, with a sullen obedience her eyes belied.

There was a second's awkward pause, both of the two left behind wishing, for the other's sake, that the scene had not taken place.

Miss Garth, being a woman, broke it.

"The lady who was to bring me to England, was suddenly compelled to start a day sooner. She wanted me to telegraph to you; but you had told me I could come any day I liked. And I thought I would save you the trouble of meeting me." There was a faint note in her voice he did not quite understand. It might have been defiant resentment.

"It would have been no trouble," he said, gravely. "I suppose you arrived from town by the half-past two train. I hope lunch is ready," with anxious hospitality.

"I should like some, I am very hungry. I think I will go up to my room now—if I shan't inconvenience your housekeeper," with a touch of ingenuous malice. But then, the woman had been so insufferably

rude to her, and it had been so uncalled-for. But she smiled up into his face with a smile that made him forgive even the housekeeper.

"Jane is entirely at your service—so am I," he said, smiling; then he went to the foot of the staircase and called Jane to come and show Miss Garth to her room.

## CHAPTER II.

THE house was furnished just as it had been in the times of Aston's predecessors, distant connections of his, from whom, through the death of the last owner's sons, he had inherited the mills and house. He had altered nothing in it, and the furniture was just old-fashioned enough to look dowdy, and not old enough to have the interest and beauty of a time still more remote. But the dining-room was an exception. The furniture was magnificent. It had formerly been in the possession of one of the oldest families in the county, and had been bought by the late Mr. Aston at a sale at the Castle, the family having come to ruin. It was of carved black oak—massive dining-table, straight, high-backed chairs, couch, side-boards were simply works of art.

The room itself was the only handsome one in the house. It was really two made into one, and ran the whole depth of the house. In the front, it looked straight on to the street. At the back, it opened with glass doors into the gardens, at the end of which stood the mills. The garden lay brown and leafless in the bright winter sunshine. It was a quaint, old-fashioned garden, with flagged court and pathway; a line of picturesque old outbuilding lining it on the left, and serving as workshops and stores.

Miss Garth, coming into the dining-room a quarter of an hour later, stopped for a moment to look out. It suddenly flashed across her that she would find Riverbridge dreadfully dull. The room was divided in half by a large screen, which Miss Garth's artistic eyes swiftly defined as "shocking." She went towards it, and, passing behind, came in sight of the beautiful old oak.

When Aston entered he found her seated on one of the chairs, its dark wood and crimson velvet making an exquisite background for the pretty head.

"I shall never feel lazy here!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't! These chairs are meant for people with a backbone. Don't you think our ancestors must have



been much better than we? They didn't lounge their time away in lovely, comfortable chairs. I had such a beauty in Germany. It came originally from America. But I never could do anything in it but eat sweets and read novels. In this chair I shall be forced to do yards of sewing, and read nothing more frivolous than history."

He laughed; but he was scarcely yet recovered from the shock of a discovery he had just made. Till that moment he had been too disturbed to think of his ward's personal appearance; but, as she met him with those laughing eyes, as he looked at the pretty, fair-haired head, pressed against the crimson velvet, he was brought to the sudden conviction that the lanky, plain school-girl had grown into the prettiest young lady he had seen for many years.

They sat down to luncheon, which was a very good one; for Jane, with all her shortcomings, was a splendid cook. Miss Garth chatted and ate away, apparently quite indifferent as to whether Aston answered her or not. He ate his meat in growing dismay and perplexity. Every moment, as he listened to her and looked at her, he wondered more and more how she was to exist in that sleepy hollow, Riverbridge.

After luncheon they did not go to the room in which Aston generally sat, and which opened off the dining-room.

Jane, with a sullen civility, told Miss Garth that she was making a few preparations in it, and that, as she was not expected till the morrow, they were not quite finished.

Miss Garth, who had taken a violent dislike to the woman, accepted the explanation with cold indifference, and then, drawing up one of the high-backed chairs to the fire, placed her pretty feet on the marble fender, and prepared, as she said, "for a good talk."

"You can smoke, you know," she said, nodding with a delicious imperiousness at Aston, who sat down on the other side of the fireplace. "I got used to that in Germany; and I think we ought to begin as we mean to go on. We ought to understand each other, ought not we?" looking across with her frank, innocent girl-eyes, into the face of the man of the world, who had known life almost to its dregs when he was little more than her age. "I am so glad to be here. What a funny old town it is! I

saw a little of it coming from the station. I am longing to walk through it. And the mills—you must take me over them. Oh, I don't mind in the least getting covered with flour. And isn't that a brewery on the other side of the street? I smelt the hops as I came along, and heard the engines at work. Oh, it is all delightful!"

"I am afraid you will find it very dull. Flour-mills, and even breweries, are apt to grow monotonous, unless you have a personal interest in them; and then it is often more harassing than—profitable!"

"Business is very bad nowadays, isn't it?" she asked, with such pretty gravity that he could not help smiling. "I feel I owe you so much for looking so well after my affairs. I know how good you have been."

"Oh, that's nothing!" hastily.

"Not to you, perhaps, but to me," she answered, with a return of that note he had not understood before, and looking at him with a bright smile in her eyes which made him feel uncomfortable. "But, in spite of that trouble, I am afraid your most tiresome work is to come. You see, I am no longer a kind of abstract account-book, in which to enter various disbursements and gains to my debit and credit, and then to be pigeon-holed again into that distant German town; but I am now a living reality you will have to face every day. It will be dreadful for you!"

"Indeed—the contrary!"

His own conscience was pricking him very hard. There was so much truth in her words. Beyond looking after her money affairs, he had taken up very few other duties of guardianship, and had most cheerfully left her to the care of the family in Germany, with whom, by her dying father's wish, she had been placed till she was eighteen. All the six years she had been there, he had only gone over twice to see her, while his correspondence with the family had been most desultory. Up till now, he felt he had done his duty. He had trebled the small fortune her father had left her. But the young lady herself was putting his conduct in a new light.

"I am only afraid you will tire of it," he said, with a gentleness born of that uneasy conscience. "But there is one thing, you needn't stay longer than you like!"

She opened her violet-blue eyes in amazement.

"But I must be here at least a year,

mustn't I?" with an emphasis that made the year sound like a century.

He laughed. At his time of life, a year seemed but a flutter of Time's wings. But she was still so young!

"Why are you laughing?" a little impatiently.

"I don't know. Certainly a year is long enough for heaps of things to happen in."

"You don't mean to say you are thinking of sending me away?" anxiously.

"Certainly not!" with an emphasis kindled by the shadow in such beautiful eyes. "But——"

"But what?"

"Oh, everybody knows what 'but' means in a young lady's life," he said, lightly, but feeling desperate before this very literal and imperious young person.

"Oh, that!" with a note of contempt mingled with relief. "For I suppose you mean that. But you mustn't really think any of that nonsense about me. There's no chance; not the slightest."

She looked at him with big, frank eyes, which had not the smallest self-consciousness in them. He met them with much outward gravity and considerable inward amusement. Truth forbade him assenting, and that simple unconsciousness made it impossible for him to even laughingly remonstrate with her.

"I have other plans for my life. I haven't quite decided yet. But when I do, I will tell you—— I suppose you would like me, as you are my guardian, to tell you things?" she added, meditatively, looking at him as if he were some very old fossil of that respectable species.

He started slightly, but recovered himself before his momentary discomposure attracted her attention.

"Perhaps it would be as well," he said, in the tone of a grandfather; indeed, he felt suddenly old enough to be her great-grandfather.

That calm gaze, with its thoughtful question, had been a revelation to him. He had not been thinking himself old, as he sat listening to her talk. Indeed, he had never felt himself to be old. It came now upon him like a moral douche, though the next second he felt that he ought to be glad, as the great difference in their ages removed much awkwardness from the relations between them.

"I don't wish to be a too exacting guardian," he said, with a kindly smile. "But if you want anything; if it will be a relief to you to tell me anything; if I can

help you, either in trouble or happiness, till you leave me, my life is at your service."

"Thank you," she said. But her eyes were preoccupied, and she seemed hardly to take in the meaning of the simply-spoken words. But then, she did not yet know Brend Aston. If he undertook such a charge, he would carry it through till the death. There were others who understood him better, and it seemed as if a breath from the spirit of those who knew him so well stirred the air of the room like a deep, hard sigh.

Aston heard nothing. He was looking at, and thinking, too, earnestly of his beautiful young ward.

"Of course, I shall ask your opinion on all matters," she said, in the same abstracted way, "and——" she suddenly sprang up, and with a swift flash, like a bird on the wing, she darted to the screen and looked behind. As she suspected, Jane was there, listening. The housekeeper made a stealthy rush to the door; but the girl was too quick. It would have been better if Miss Garth had allowed her to escape quietly. But her indignation, her contempt, kindled into flame her hot, impetuous temper.

"When I am speaking to my guardian, I prefer no listeners," she said.

Jane turned instinctively, a look of such hate, anger, defiance in her eyes, that even Miss Garth was startled; but as the housekeeper hurried through the door, Aston came up.

"Don't mind her," he said, his voice unsteady. "It shall not happen again," with the look on his face which made some people call him ugly. A sudden, nameless fear chilled the girl from head to foot.

What sort of house was this she had come to, where the servant could play the eavesdropper, and cast such evil glances, and the master change from pleasant kindness to this fierce, cruel-faced man?

"I wish I hadn't caught her," she exclaimed. "I did it on the impulse of the moment. It was very wrong——"

"I am full of shame that it happened," he said, the evil look gone. "I don't know what possessed her. She is an old servant—and as such, takes liberties. Why, poor little child, you are trembling."

"Oh! It is nothing," with a little, hysterical laugh, feeling reassured under his kindness. "I dare say she thinks me an interloper, and——"

"You will have your own maid to wait

on you to-morrow. I am sorry she can't be here to-day. But I am going round now to ask Miss Ross to come to you at once. You aren't afraid of being left alone a little?"

"Afraid!" all her spirits returning. "What should I be afraid of? I shall go up and unpack. And you mustn't let me disturb your plans in any way."

Aston went off to the house where the cousin lodged who was to come and act as Miss Garth's chaperon during her stay at Bridge House. She, too, was not to arrive till the morrow; Jane, who ruled the house, having said that her room would not be ready till then.

Miss Ross was a stout, sweet-tempered old maid, some ten or twelve years older than Aston. She lived in Riverbridge when she was not visiting her numerous friends, and was always willing to do any service for Aston, who was very kind to her. Her income was of the narrowest; and the prospect of living a whole year free of expense, to say nothing of the idea of chaperoning a girl, which was always a pleasure to her, had made this plan of Aston's very agreeable to her. She was quite willing to come at once—only there was Jane. Miss Ross always found it good policy not to clash with Jane.

"Hang Jane!" broke out Aston, with a still more forcible exclamation following; to avoid the repetition of which, Miss Ross—being a devout woman—came away immediately.

### CHAPTER III.

It was about eleven o'clock of the same day. Miss Garth, being tired after her journey, had gone to bed early.

Miss Ross had sat up, to talk her over with Aston. But she found him very unresponsive, and at last retired herself.

"She's a sweet girl," she said, as she wished him good-night. "I like her immensely. What a pity it is that she and Jane have come to a battle already!"

It was more than a pity, judging from Aston's face as he sat smoking in the sitting-room. He sat with his face turned towards the door which opened into the dining-room. Miss Ross had closed it after her, with a kindly precaution which had rather irritated him than otherwise.

The window was open, and, as he sat, he was in the current of air between the door and window.

"And you know, Brend, how bad your rheumatism was last winter. It was all

very well for you, when you were young, to sit in draughts; but, at your age, you ought to be careful. It would be dreadful if you got it chronic, like me," with a half-suppressed groan, as she left the room.

But Aston forgot his slight annoyance, almost before the door was closed. He thought how little the tender fussiness of kindly women could avail to shut out the more deadly ills that assailed men's lives. He had one of his black fits on this night. A quarter of an hour later, when Miss Ross—satisfied that her sheets were well aired—had nearly finished her preparations for bed, and the pretty girl-guest was already deep in slumber, and there was no one to see nor hear, but that pale, gloomy-eyed man, sitting alone with his black memories in the room below, the door opened stealthily.

Jane stood on the threshold.

He knew she would come, and the expression of his face did not change.

"May I shut the shutters, sir?" she asked, in a civil tone, which everything in her face and bearing contradicted. She closed the shutters which opened, in a line with the dining-room, on the street. Aston went on smoking in silence. Then she came back from the windows and faced him. She tried to speak; but a tumult of passions choked the words. For a second, he, too, was silent. Then he tossed the end of his cigar in the fire, and looked up at her.

"You will understand," he said, deliberately, "that I will have no more such scenes of rudeness and disobedience as I have had to-day; when I add that your staying here depends on your obedience and civility to Miss Garth, you will understand that I am in earnest."

Her face was a study. It rang almost every change of human feeling as he spoke. Fear preponderated.

"You would never send me away?"

"It depends on yourself," with merciless hardness.

Then the rage within her burst out.

"You will not! You dare not!"

He rose to his feet, his face very pale, his eyes burning with a lurid light.

"You will find that I dare anything," he said, in even, steady tones. "I value my freedom of action so much, that, rather than lose it, I would turn you out of doors this very moment, let the consequences be what they may. And you know it."

She did know it, and was afraid again.

"You goad me into saying things I

wouldn't. It is because I am afraid for you! You never think of the past. It is only I——"

A curious smile flickered across his lips, which chilled even her passion.

"On the contrary, there are so many to think. Mr. Charles Wilton makes it his immediate concern."

"Charles Wilton! That drunken fool! You had better have flung him into the mill-race, than have set him up into business. Do you think that would make him hold his tongue?"

Aston smiled again; that cold, inscrutable smile, which struck to her inmost being. A vague sense of its meaning fell on her. She knew so well the inexorable will of the man. She stirred uneasily. That act of charity, which had excited the wonder and disapproval of Riverbridge, was but a means to an end. It gave the drunken sot the power of indulging in the vice which was so swiftly hurrying him to destruction. But some more powerful feeling stirred her.

"Why did you let that girl come here? Was there no other place for her to go, with her golden hair and blue eyes? She will fool you! You will forget everything! Even the curse!"

"You are mad, Jane," he said, forcing himself to speak quietly. "Do not presume to couple Miss Garth with me. Good Heavens!" with an uncontrollable burst of rage, "is every one mad? What are they thinking of, that I cannot have a child like that in the house without all these absurd suggestions?"

"She's too beautiful," sullenly, "and you are but a child yourself, where beauty is concerned. To see her, day by day, to have her under your roof," her voice rose into a curious compound of rage and entreaty; "for Heaven's sake, send her away, before it is too late. You will be asking her to marry you—and the curse will fall—it will come home to you again, as it has——"

"Silence!" The pale quiet of Aston's face flamed into a fury, before which her anger seemed a pale, weak thing. "Leave the room."

She obeyed, cowed for the moment. Then her master's rigid figure drooped, and he sank trembling into his chair, large drops of moisture gathering on his brow.

And so he sat, while all the town lay hushed in sleep and darkness. To him

the night brought no such passionless peace and rest, for it was haunted.

In this woman was the continual presence of the curse. To hush the horror of it, he had plunged more recklessly than before into sin and folly. It was in this life he had met this woman. There had been a quarrel in a low gambling-house, in which he had been seriously wounded. They had carried him back to the rooms where he lived, and the woman of the house, not wishing to have the trouble and responsibility, was going to send him straight to the hospital. But she had another lodger. A young woman, just on the point of leaving England for Australia. She offered to nurse the wounded man, though she had only seen him coming and going in the house.

The illness was long and dangerous. She lost her passage, and with it the opening she had had in Australia. She was a patient, unwearying nurse. When he began to recover, the doctors said he owed his life to her.

Aston, as he struggled back to life, was grateful. In the days of his delirium, when she sat by him, allowing no one to share her watch, he had betrayed many things. In his weakness, when physically and mentally helpless, dependent on her for everything, he told her more. It was a relief to speak.

The acquaintance had continued. A curious acquaintance. On his side, gratitude gradually faded into repugnance, fear, distrust. On her side, her tender care of him became——

Well, they both knew, though the subject was never mentioned between them. If she loved him blindly, madly; if she would have laid down her life for him to trample on; she never said a word. Nor did he ever act or speak as if he knew. But she clung to him. He could not throw her off. And when he suddenly and unexpectedly came into the possession of these flour-mills at Riverbridge, twenty years before, she had come, five years later, to be his housekeeper.

She was a plain, sallow-faced, ill-tempered woman. People wondered how he put up with her. But she stayed on at Bridge House, and her presence kept ever alive the memory of the curse; while not an event of good or evil, of honour or dishonour, in her master's life, was unknown to her.